

Treatment for sex offenders in TDC
(HB 484 by Melton/Edwards)

DIGEST: HB 484 would have authorized the Texas Department of Corrections to institute a psychological treatment and counseling program for inmates convicted of sexual offenses. Certain parolees would have received continuing care and supervision after their release.

GOVERNOR'S
REASONS
FOR VETO:

The governor said that the program would have required an additional appropriation for TDC and that sufficient funds were not available.

AUTHOR'S
VIEW:

Rep. Bob Melton was "very disappointed" by the veto. He said TDC would not have needed an additional appropriation to begin the proposed counseling program. Rather, TDC could have reallocated already existing funds to create this valuable program.

Sex crimes are often repeated by the same offenders unless they get treatment, Rep. Melton said. Similar programs have been found to markedly lower the recidivism rate, which should justify a program. In addition, TDC is under a court mandate to expand its psychiatric staff, and this program would coincide with and complement that goal. Finally, at a time when the state has narrowly avoided massive federal court fines for failure to improve its prisons, a veto of this bill would seem to indicate that our resolve is slipping and that our show of "good faith" is temporary.

NOTES: The House Research Organization analysis of HB 484 appeared in the April 8, 1987 Daily Floor Report.